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SUBJECT: UNSC REFORM: LITTLE CHANGE IN SUBSTANCE BUT SOME
MOVEMENT ON PROCESS

REF: A. USUN 1142
[1](#)B. USUN 1032

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. During a meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on UNSC expansion on December 14, President of the General Assembly (PGA) Srgjan Kerim announced that he had created a three-PermRep "task force" to help him advance the upcoming inter-governmental negotiations on Council reform. But he emphasized that it would be up to member states to identify the "elements" and put forward a document that could serve as a basis for these negotiations. While G-4 (Japan, India, Brazil, and Germany) and Uniting for Consensus (UFC -- led by Pakistan, Italy, and Egypt) delegations largely agreed on the categories of negotiables, they disagreed sharply about how these negotiations should proceed, with the G-4 arguing that the OEWG has outlived its usefulness and UFC insisting that all negotiations must take place within the working group. Amb Wolff underscored that delegations cannot disregard Kerim's principle that UNSC reform must go hand-in-hand with reform of the broader UN and joined China and Russia in reinforcing the importance of inclusive negotiations through the OEWG. G-4 delegations, led by Germany, nevertheless forged ahead with a timeline that envisions inter-governmental negotiations beginning in February 2008. The Germans convened on December 12 a meeting of an over-arching group, to which they did not/not invite USUN, to develop proposals on the six categories of elements to present to Kerim as a basis for negotiations. End Summary.

PGA Outlines General Process

[1](#)2. (U) As previewed in ref A, PGA Kerim announced that Bangladesh PR Ismat Jahan, Chilean PR Heraldo Munoz, and Portugese PR Joao Salgueiro had agreed to serve as Vice-Chairman of the OEWG, and that together with Kerim they would comprise a "task force" on UNSC reform. The role of the task force would be to serve as focal points for communication with member states, in particular to identify "elements" for the inter-governmental negotiations on UNSC reform. But Kerim emphasized that "it will be up to member states to identify and put forward a document to the task force that could serve as a basis for inter-governmental negotiations." He expressed the intention to convene "focused meetings" in February, April, and June on UNSC reform, but said this timetable would be conditional on the

progress achieved. Kerim also reiterated that his "seven pillars" for UNSC reform (contained in ref B) should guide the process going forward. In his concluding remarks, Kerim emphasized that member states proposing a textual basis for negotiations was not a substitute for the OEWG. Rather, the working group would continue to exist until inter-governmental negotiations actually begin.

Broad Agreement on Categories of "Negotiables"

¶3. (U) Although G-4 and UFC countries repeated the same substantive positions on UNSC reform they expressed during the November 2007 plenary debate (ref B), they largely agreed on the list of categories of elements that should serve as a basis for inter-governmental negotiations called for in the UNGA resolution on UNSC reform adopted in September 2007. Drawing from the 2007 reports of the two facilitators, most delegations agreed the negotiations should cover the following areas: the size of an enlarged Council, categories of membership (permanent vs. non-permanent), method of electing new members, the question of the veto (for both existing permanent members and new members), UNSC working methods, and a review mechanism. Pakistan and Spain added the question of regional representation to the list, but India objected to this category on the grounds that neither Spain nor Italy had convinced EU leaders to embrace regional representation on the UNSC at the recent EU summit in Lisbon, so the idea would not work at the UN. In his concluding remarks, Kerim noted that there appeared to be "considerable support for an intermediary approach" to UNSC reform, but he did not endorse any particular list of negotiable elements.

¶4. (U) Within the P-5, while the U.S., China, and Russia

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avoided comment on the set of negotiable elements, the UK and France appeared to endorse them. Amb Wolff noted that while the U.S. has no specific proposal for Council expansion, it looked forward to reviewing new "realistic and reasonable" proposals for "modest expansion" of the Council. But he emphasized that modest expansion of the Council is not a goal in itself, and in this regard, reminded delegations that they could not simply pay "lip service" to Kerim's first "pillar" that UNSC reform must go hand in hand with transformation of the wider UN system. Amb Wolff urged Kerim to help establish mechanisms in parallel with the OEWG process to ensure broad UN reform, including in areas such as UN decision-making and financing. China did not endorse the list of categories but did say UNSC reform should result in greater representation for developing countries, especially in Africa, and protect the interests of small countries. Russia also did not comment on the list of negotiables, but said it was prepared to examine proposals based on "realism," warning against "excessive" expansion of the Council. Most African delegations also endorsed the categories of negotiables outlined by the UFC and G-4.

But Sharp Disagreement on Process

¶5. (U) Although they largely agreed on the categories of negotiables, G-4 and UFC delegations disagreed sharply about where and how these negotiations should take place. G-4 delegations, led by India and Germany, bemoaned the "lack of progress" within the OEWG over the past 14 years and argued that inter-governmental negotiations could not/not take place within the working group because of its reliance on consensus decision-making. UFC delegations, led by Pakistan and Italy, insisted that the OEWG must remain the forum in which to begin inter-governmental negotiations, in order to ensure the transparency and inclusiveness of the process. The rival camps also disagreed about the utility of the over-arching group meeting called by Germany (see para 7). While Brazil and India endorsed the meeting called by Germany, Pakistan expressed "great concern" about "any exclusive, unilateral,

or self-generated group" that seeks to "determine a course of action or make proposals on behalf of the rest of the membership." Italy, acknowledging it had been invited to attend the German meeting but declined, implied that such meetings replicate the work of the OEWG and are redundant.

¶6. (U) While the U.S., China, and Russia explicitly reaffirmed the role of the OEWG and by implication the need for the "broadest possible agreement" or even "consensus" on UNSC reform, the UK and France ducked the issue entirely. Amb Wolff argued the OEWG represents the "appropriate forum" in which to undertake inter-governmental negotiations and the best guarantee that the process will remain inclusive. China said it was open to ideas like the PGA's task force, but the process should be "open, transparent, and ensure equal participation for all." In this regard, it noted that the task force and any over-arching group convened to advise it would present only "informal advice" to be considered by the OEWG. Russia underscored the need for "very broad" support for UNSC reform that goes beyond the two-thirds required for an amendment to the Charter. Most African delegations refrained from comment on the utility of the OEWG, although Egypt argued that the working group constitutes the "only forum in which to discuss UNSC reform."

G-4 Pushes Ahead (Maybe Without U.S.)

¶7. (SBU) Despite lack of agreement on the process moving forward on UNSC reform, Germany led G-4 delegations in outlining an ambitious timeline to begin inter-governmental negotiations. The German PR announced that he had convened on December 12 a meeting of an over-arching group, "open to all" but about which only some were informed in advance, to begin drafting options for the six categories of negotiable elements. Although USUN was not/not invited to the German meeting, we learned that of the roughly 25 delegations present, most were either G-4 members or their supporters. Representatives of the S-5 group on working methods were invited, as were France and the UK from the P-5. Italy was

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the only major UFC country invited, but it declined to attend. According to participants at the meeting, the Germans asked six different countries to volunteer to draft six separate papers with options on the negotiable elements by early January. If not enough volunteers come forward, the Germans would draft the papers themselves, with a view to presenting the PGA with a basis on which to begin inter-governmental negotiations in February. The Japanese PR said during the OEWG meeting that he supported this timeframe. Khalilzad